the time taken for grant of mineral concession has been more than that prescribed in the Mineral Concession Rules, 1960. The High Level Committee (HLC) constituted by the Planning Commission has evaluated the reasons for the same and recommended measures for reducing the delays. Report of the HLC is available on the website of Ministry of Mines. (http://mines. nic.in/).

(c) and (d) Instances of illegal mining from time to time have come to the notice of the Central Government. State Governments have been empowered to frame rules under Section 23 C of the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 for prevention of illegal mining, transportation and storage of minerals etc. The Central Government has also directed State Governments to constitute task forces at State/District level for preventing illegal mining and the situation is being monitored.

Allocation of mining blocks

122. SHRI N. R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have received several representations requesting for giving adequate emphasis to value-added industries like steel, power and cement plants, by allocating mining blocks;

(b) if so, the steps Government have taken in this direction, so far;

(c) whether Government would henceforth consider allocating mining blocks to captive industries on preferential basis as it would lead to growth of economic development in the country; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI (REDDY): (a) to (d) Some representations have been received in the Ministry to give preference to value-adder in grant of mineral concession, including mining lease. Provisions already exist in the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 and Rules framed thereunder whereby State Government may give preference to a value adder while granting mineral concession.

Gold and diamond reserves

123. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether, according to the estimates of Geological Survey of India, the country has 475 million carats of gold and diamond reserves, worth Rs. six lakh crore;

(b) if so, the details thereof, location-wise and State-wise;

(c) whether it is also a fact mat the country imports nearly 800 tonnes of gold every year,

(d) if so, the reasons for non-exploration of such mineral-wealth; and

(e) the details of the private companies to whom leases for mining gold and diamond have been given, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) and (b) As per National Mineral Inventory prepared by Indian Bureau of Mines,

as on 1.4.200S, the total resources of gold ore (primary) and diamond are estimated at 390.29 million tonnes and 4.58 million carats respectively. The State-wise details are as under:

State-wise total resources of Gold ore (in million tonne)

State	Total resources
Andhra Pradesh	12.09
Bihar	222.88
Chhattisgarh	0.90
Jharkhand	0.34
Karnataka	66.17
Kerala	0.56
Madhya Pradesh	7.32
Maharashtra	1.52
Rajasthan	65.59
Tamil Nadu	0.067
West Bengal	12.83

State-wise total resources of Diamond (in million carats)

State	Total resources
Andhra Pradesh	1.822955
Chhattisgarh	1.304000
Madhya Pradesh	1.454958

(c) Yes, Sir. The import of gold in the last few years has been in the range of 700-800 tonnes per annum.

(d) Apart from the regional exploration for gold and diamond undertaken by Geologies) Survey of India, since the year 2000, the Central Government has been giving prior approvals for grant of reconnaissance permits for regional exploration of gold and diamond to various applicants, including private companies. These may be converted into mining leases based on the outcome of the exploration, including detailed prospecting.

(e) As per available information, since 1.1.2004 till date, prior approval for grant of mining lease for Gold has been conveyed to respective State Governments in favour of M/s. Jindal Saw Limited in Rajasthan, M/s. Ramgad Minerals and Mining Private Limited in Karnataka, M/s. Geo Mysore Services India Private Limited in Andhra Pradesh and M/s. Adi Gold Mining Private Limited in Uttarakhand respectively. The-Central Government has not conveyed any prior approval for grant of mining lease for diamond during the last three years.